



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



December 22, 2005  
Press office: +389 (0)2 308-0446  
Cell phone: +389 (0)70 323-807  
Email: [talbor@usaid.gov](mailto:talbor@usaid.gov)

## PRESS RELEASE

### 80 Roma businesses legalized through U.S. initiative

Skopje— Instead of having to operate with the constant fear of being shut down, 80 Roma businesses in Macedonia have registered and become legal entities. These businesses are now eligible for loans and other professional services. Once a small business is registered, it can then take off and grow.

More than 400 potential Roma business owners were recently informed of the benefits of running registered businesses, through a program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia.

“Now that businesses are beginning to be registered, it’s imperative that the laws and regulations are clear,” said Alfreda Brewer, Deputy Director of USAID Macedonia. “Efforts to streamline and clarify procedures—especially for small business owners— are ongoing.”

Initiated in July, the program had two objectives: First, to work with Roma NGOs and second, to work directly with Roma businessmen.

Over a six-month period, 18 training modules were designed and delivered. Members of 22 Roma NGOs were trained in leadership development, advocacy and lobbying, project cycle management, and various specific technical fields. In addition, 11 NGO representatives participated in a study tour to Slovakia, to see new approaches for working with marginalized groups, and to share information and practical suggestions with various organizations.

The activities were implemented by the Center for Institutional Development (CIRa) from Skopje, in cooperation with World Learning/Macedonia.

The “Support of Roma NGOs and the Roma Business Community” Program is part of USAID’s continuing support to the Roma and contributes to the international “Decade of the Roma” regional initiative.

Through this and other programs, USAID/Macedonia has committed more than \$3 million to support Roma activities as part of the Roma Decade initiative.

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$400 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 30 projects worth \$35 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia’s transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit [www.USAID.org.mk](http://www.USAID.org.mk).